

TORRINGTON
RURAL DISTRICT
1937.

REPORTS

OF THE

MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH
AND SANITARY SURVEYOR

FOR THE YEAR ENDING
31ST DECEMBER, 1937.

GREAT TORRINGTON:

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PUBLIC HEALTH OFFICE,

TORRINGTON.



*To the Chairman and Members of the Torrington
Rural District Council.*

GENTLEMEN,

We have pleasure in presenting for your consideration our Annual Reports for the year ended 31st December, 1937.

We are, Gentlemen,

Yours faithfully,

FREDK PRIDHAM, M.R.C.S., L.R.C.P.

Medical Officer of Health.

GEO. A. KNAPMAN, A.R.S.I., Cert. R. San. Inst.

Surveyor & Sanitary Inspector.

Torrington Rural District.

1937

General Statistics.

Area (acres)	...	...	...	...	...	79,793
Population (R.G.)...	...	...	...	...	...	7,495
Number of Inhabited Houses	...	...	...	...	...	2,223
Number of Families or separate occupiers	...	...	...	...	...	2,172
Rateable Value	...	...	...	...	...	£18,807
Sum realised by a penny rate	...	...	...	...	...	£78 7s. 3d.

Extracts from Vital Statistics of the Year.

		Male	Female	Total
Live Births	Legitimate	43	46	89
	Illegitimate	2	2	4
				93 increase of 5.

Birth Rate per 1000 of estimated Population	...	...	12·4
National Birth Rate	...	...	14·9

Deaths	...	Male, 48,	Female, 52,	Total 100
Stillbirths	...	1,	3,	4
				An increase of 5

Death Rate per 1000 of estimated Resident Population	...	...	13·87
National Death Rate	...	...	12·4

Deaths from diseases and accidents	}	from Sepsis	Nil
of Pregnancy and Childbirth	}	„ other causes	Nil

Death of Infants under one year of age:—

Legitimate infants	...	...	...	...	...	2
Illegitimate infants	...	...	...	...	...	0

Deaths from Measles (all ages)	...	...	...	...	Nil
„ „ Whooping Cough (all ages)	...	...	...	...	Nil
„ „ Diarrhoea (under 2 years of age)	...	...	...	...	Nil

CAUSES OF DEATH :—

Tuberculosis (Lungs)	3	Suicide	2
Tuberculosis (other forms) ...	0	Deaths from Violence	4
Cancer	10	Senility	9
Cerebral Hemorrhage	9	Other Defined diseases	5
Heart Disease	33	Influenza	4
Other Circulatory diseases ...	4	Diabetes	2
Pneumonia	5	Other Digestive diseases	4
Bronchitis	2	Typhoid	1
Congenital Causes... ..	2	Liver Disease	1

Notifiable Diseases.

Disease.	Cases Notified.	Cases admitted to Hospital.	Deaths.
Small Pox	—	—	—
Scarlet Fever	11	11	—
Diphtheria	—	—	—
Enteric Fever	5	5	1
Puerperal Fever	—	—	—
Puerperal Pyrexia	—	—	—
Pneumonia	8	—	5
TOTAL ...	24	16	6

Tuberculosis.

Age Periods.	New Cases.				Deaths.			
	Pulmonary		Non Pulmonary		Pulmonary		Non Pulmonary	
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
0	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
5	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
{ 10	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
{ 15	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
{ 20	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
{ 25	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
{ 35	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
{ 45	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
{ 55	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
{ 65 and upwards	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
TOTALS ...	2	—	—	—	—	—	—	—

Observations.

It is of great interest to note that the total number of cases on the list of the Devon C. C. Medical Officer of Health (Tuber-

culosis) on December 31st, 1937, was 30. The number on Dec. 31st, 1932, was 77. This gratifying decrease has no doubt been due to additional care being taken by the Health Officers as regards inspection, disinfection and isolation. Better housing conditions, fresh air, extra milk and a general brighter outlook have also largely contributed to help in the reduction of cases.

On the other hand, the figures showing the number of Births are very disquieting.

1925, Number of Births,	165	1936, Number of Births,	88
1930, " "	132	1937, " "	89
1935, " "	110		

General Sanitary Matters of the District.

The Officials of the District are the Medical Officer of Health, who is employed as a part time official, and a full time Sanitary Surveyor. A Monthly Report is made to the whole Council.

Nursing Arrangements, Hospitals and other Institutions available for the District.

District Nurses, provided by local Voluntary Nursing Associations, are available in most Parishes.

There are no Hospitals in the District.

Isolation Hospital.

The Hospital at Bideford which serves the contributory surrounding districts, is fully equipped to deal with all cases of infection.

Fortunately no serious outbreak of Infectious Disease has occurred, although scattered cases have arisen throughout the District from time to time.

All cases were removed to the Hospital, thus considerably lessening the risks of contact.

Ambulance.

St. John Motor Ambulance is available for the removal of accident and non-infectious cases of illness throughout the district. A voluntary quota is raised in the Parishes.

Laboratory Facilities.

All analysis of milk, foodstuff and water is undertaken by arrangement with the Devon C.C. at the Laboratory, Exeter.

Schools.

The general good condition is maintained, with the exception of a few, which have been adversely reported on before. The

condition of these Schools is now engaging the attention of the Devon C.C. Education Authority.

The numbers of the scholars attending the Schools still steadily decline.

Dairies and Cowsheds.

Progress in regard to clean premises is still slow. The older generation of cow-keepers are reluctant to change their unsatisfactory methods, but the younger farmers are shewing the benefit of instruction in clean milk production by the satisfactory results obtained by analysis.

The absence of a satisfactory water supply on most Farms is a handicap to the proper washing down of the shippens. Far too often, the floors are just brushed without any water flushing.

There are 13 accredited milk producers in the district.

Housing.

The general standard of housing is good and advantage has been taken of the Housing (Rural Workers') Act, to recondition 12 Cottages during the year.

Each reconditioning ensures that a satisfactory water and drainage scheme is incorporated, and the reconditioning schemes carried out in the past few years, have had a big effect throughout the district towards promoting better health conditions.

Water Supplies.

The supplies of water were well maintained throughout the district during the year.

The daily gallonage usage throughout the district is considerably increasing and an unlimited piped supply appears to be necessary in the near future.

Annual Report of the Sanitary Surveyor.

Sanitation.

Public Sewers in the villages of Beaford, High Bickington, Winkleigh, Shebbear, Sheepwash, Little Torrington, St. Giles and Langtree, have been repaired and maintained and extended. New septic tanks have been installed at High Bickington and Winkleigh.

Water Supplies.

There are no reservoirs in the area, and the public are dependent on wells for a domestic supply.

New wells with service taps have been provided at Yarnscombe and Hollacombe.

Samples of water from the public wells are regularly sent for analysis, and the wells are cleaned out as required.

Provision has been made in most Parishes for water storage in case of an outbreak of fire.

During the summer months the various Parish Councils deal with their own water supplies. This arrangement has proved to be of great value in preventing waste, and conserving supplies in dry periods.

Scavenging.

Household refuse is generally burnt, and each village has a dump suitably situated for the disposal of tins, etc.

Bakehouses.

There are seven Bakehouses in the District, and they are kept clean and wholesome. Delivery in the outlying areas is made by enclosed vans, and in covered baskets when delivering to the houses.

Slaughter Houses.

The fifteen private Slaughter Houses, distributed throughout the District, are generally kept in a clean condition.

As far as is practical, inspection of slaughtering is carried out, but in so large an area it is impossible to examine all carcasses, as some Butchers are killing for the London Markets extensively on three days a week.

Slaughtering Licences, 48 in number, have been issued in connection with the Slaughtering Act.

The general quality of the meat is of a high standard, and it is a rare occurrence to find a generalised disease.

Notification of occasional slaughtering is received.

The Butchers' Shops are generally of modern construction and fitted with glass fronts. Delivery in the area is made by covered vans.

Milk Supply.

There are 553 registered Dairies and Cow-sheds in the District, including 18 retailers.

In conjunction with the Devon C.C., samples are regularly sent for bacteriological examination, and enquiries made when the sample is not up to standard.

Infectious Disease and Disinfection.

16 cases of Infectious Disease were notified during the year.

Disinfection is carried out in all cases of infectious disease, including Tuberculosis and cases of long standing illness.

Overcrowding.

All cases of overcrowding which were found during the course of the survey have been abated.

In consequence of the regulation allowing living rooms to be classed as bedrooms, when defining the allowable number of persons to each house, the Overcrowding Act has not operated as well as was at first anticipated.

Housing.

Number of New Houses erected during the year :—

By Private Enterprise	...	...	5
Public Housing	...	...	Nil

1. Inspection of Dwelling-houses during the year :—

(1) (a)	Total number of dwelling-houses inspected for housing defects (under Public Health or Housing Acts) ...	...	40
(b)	Number of inspections made for the purpose		42
(2) (a)	Number of dwelling-houses (included under sub-head (1) above which were inspected and recorded under the Housing Consolidated Regulations, 1925 ...		20
(b)	Number of inspections made for the purpose		20
(3)	Number of dwelling-houses found to be in a state so dangerous or injurious to health as to be unfit for human habitation ...		Nil
(4)	Number of dwelling-houses (exclusive of those referred to under the preceding sub-head) found not to be in all respects reasonably fit for human habitation ...	...	8

2. Remedy of Defects during the year without Service of formal Notices :—

Number of defective dwelling-houses rendered fit in consequence of informal action by the Local Authority or their Officers	...	7
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3. Action under Statutory Powers during the year :—

A. Proceedings under Sections 17, 18 and 23 of the Housing Act, 1930.

(1)	Number of dwelling-houses in respect of which notices were served requiring repairs ...	Nil
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(2) Number of dwelling-houses which were rendered fit after service of formal notices :—

(a)	by owners	...	...	...	Nil
(b)	by local authority in default of owners	...			Nil

B. Proceedings under Public Health Acts :—

(1) Number of dwelling-houses in respect of which notices were served requiring defects to be remedied 3

(2) Number of dwelling-houses in which defects were remedied after service of formal notices :—

(a)	by owners	...	...	...	3
(b)	by local authority in default of owners	...			Nil

C. Proceedings under Sections 19 and 21 of the Housing Act, 1930.

(1) Number of dwelling-houses in respect of which Demolition Orders were made ... Nil

(2) Number of dwelling-houses demolished in pursuance of Demolition Orders... Nil

D. Proceedings under Section 20 of the Housing Act, 1930

(1) Number of separate tenements or underground rooms in respect of which Closing Orders were made Nil

(2) Number of separate tenements or underground rooms in respect of which Closing Orders were determined, the tenement or room having been rendered fit Nil

Housing (Rural Workers') Act, 1926.

Good advantage is still being taken by owners of property to modernise their houses with the help of the grant obtainable under the Act.

The appearance of a reconditioned Cottage is an advertisement which soon induces other owners in the vicinity to institute enquiries respecting their own properties.

